

They are powerless to do otherwise, and they are just as good and faithful mothers, wives and sisters as were their grandmothers. It is only in this way that they can pay their social debts, make home what it should be, and do their share of missionary and church work.

A few years ago I heard a brilliant lecture by a popular speaker, who, by the way, has since broken down from mental overwork. His subject was "Give us a Rest." I remember only a single question. It was "How could a man get nervous prostration traveling in a canal boat?" But it suggested another question, How can a man hope to escape it? when he does, as nearly all our business men and brain workers who have occasion to travel do, spend their days with mental tension strung up to high C, and their nights traveling at the rate of forty miles an hour.

What the golden future may disclose as a remedy I do not know. There is but one now—to run. "Cowardly?" did you say? All right, call it that if it suits you, but tired nerves rarely, if ever, regain their normal tension and tone in the old environment. The scene must be changed, and not only business but office and home must be left behind.

One remarkable feature of nervous prostration is the insidiousness of its approach. Usually the mental worker or business man is in most danger when feeling at his best. Work becomes surprisingly easy. He simply dashes it off and is hungry for more. The day is all too short to do what he really wants and delights to do. His mental perceptions respond to the slightest touch. He seems intuitively to grasp the whole of a subject which ordinarily he would have to take time to study.

A few years ago I heard a slow-spoken lymphatic business man giving some excellent advice to an over-worked business friend about the danger if he did not slow up. The reply was a laugh and the remark, "Yes, I know I am doing the work of two or three men now, but I could add all you do and not feel it." A week later he was on his back, and was able to start to Florida in about a month.—Interior.

Degeneration Versus Evolution.

BY HENRY M. KING, D. D.

The law of degeneration appears to be quite as prominent, and in many instances certainly more powerful than any law of evolution. We are all familiar with its operation in the vegetable kingdom, for example, among flower-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees, and are aware that the uncultivated land quickly returns to soil, but few of us realize the wide extent of its operation even here. Scientists inform us that in the animal kingdom the evidence of the working of this law is scarcely less striking. Philologists, we are told, have long recognized the existence of this law in accounting for certain linguistic facts. And history is filled with the story of buried cities and nations and civilizations, of ancient people so illustrious for their art, architecture, literature and philosophy that the students of the twentieth century of the Christian era find among them their authoritative models and standards of excellence, and yet who deteriorated morally, intellectually and physically, and in some instances have entirely disappeared from among the nations. The history of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Greece and Rome is the history of a decline and a fall, as well as of a rise, of a degeneration following close upon the heels of their high development, and by a law as certain and resistless as any law of nature. The greatness of their glory and achievements is now known principally by the splendor of their ruins.

As bearing upon the central position of the integrity of man's moral nature in all social and national progress, it has been truthfully said, "If the story of those nations who in times past rose to positions of greatness and power and civilization, and afterward fell away, be examined, it will be found, without exception, that what brought about their downfall was a marked moral deterioration." Heeren, the historian of Greece, declared "Greece fell when sacred things ceased to be regarded as sacred."

But it is not the cause, but the fact of their decline and fall, to which we are especially directing attention. They fell, and fell by a process of degeneration which no "residual forces" were able to resist. Ancient history is, in no small part, made up of the record of social and national decay, and a purely naturalistic student and observer may reasonably question whether in the boasted progress of our day there is the element of permanence, to say nothing of any promise of continued advance.

But there are other facts of science which the evolutionary theory is compelled to recognize and grapple with, viz., the frequent cases of fixedness of type, in which no change has ever been apparent, arrested development, reversion to type, evil heredity, parasitism and other facts which are believed to find their analogues in human life and national history. All of these combine to resist the evolutionary force and narrow the field of its operation very materially. Evolution is not now regarded by its advocates as a law of universal application, covering all the separate forms of life. The definition which the late Prof. Le Conte was finally constrained to

adopt was "The law of progress of the whole," by which he means the whole organic kingdom looked at in its entirety.

When, therefore, it is remembered that the law of evolution finds another and an opposing law, the law of degeneration, working simultaneously with it, and working universally and with tremendous and sometimes resistless energy, a law recognized alike by science and history and religion, that it is prevented in its operation and greatly limited in its application by numerous discovered scientific facts, that it has suffered from the start at the hands of its advocates by many vital modifications and still unremoved disagreements among them, and that it has encountered grave problems in psychology, biology, ethics, philology, geology and theology, which it has brought to light but has not been able to solve, surely the thoughtful observer might be justified in saying the theory of evolution is giving itself a conspicuous illustration of "the struggle for existence."

The time may come when it will be accepted as a fact universally, by all scientists as well as by all theologians, that our world is a fallen world, according to the teachings of the Scriptures and not less according to the teachings of Nature, which reiterates the voice of inspiration that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," when all men will see that here whatever may have been the original intent of the Creator, when he pronounced the work of his hands "good," the law of degeneration is now in active exercise and meets us everywhere, in the physical world and in the life of men and of nations, that destructive forces work side by side with the forces of life, that noxious weeds grow by themselves, while edible grains lapse into cultivation, and that sin and degeneracy perpetuate themselves without extraneous aid, while righteousness and true, permanent progress need the impulse of a divine interposition and guidance.—Zion's Advocate.

The Virtue of Pluck.

BY IAN MACLAREN.

Perhaps the bravest thing in literature is the letter which Paul wrote from his prison in Rome to his beloved Philippians. He had been arrested in the midst of his great campaign, and hindered from those journeys by which he hoped to compass the Roman Empire for Christ. He was confined in a barrack room, and chained to a Roman soldier. He was in danger of death, and hardly had a friend on whom to depend. He was now an old man, not so much through years as through labors; he was infirm in body and a constant sufferer; the very work he had done was being undermined by his enemies, and it looked as if the greatest career open to any Jew in his day were to end in failure. What a letter he might have written to those Philippians, and would have written if he had been an ordinary missionary, or an ordinary traveller, about his disappointments, and the attack on his name, and his bodily sufferings, and his personal discomfort. Why, I've read a page in a missionary's report on the poor food which the man had, and many pages in travels about the flies, and the bad water, and such like calamities through which the heroic explorer had been passing. But this man never tells you what he ate or drank, what he suffered through cold or heat, what an unspeakable harassment that Roman guard was, or how miserable were his lodgings. No, what he tells the Philippians is his satisfaction that he has got to Rome, and that the gospel has been preached there, and that his fellow-servant Epaphroditus had recovered from sickness, and that the Philippians had been so kind to him. He enlarges also on the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, but it is in order to show that through suffering Christ had come to his throne. There is no crying nor pining in the letter of Christ's soldier, but it is full of high spirits and holy gait. He commands the Philippians to forget themselves and to think of other people, not to boast, but to carry themselves modestly, to keep peace among themselves and to help one another, and, above all, he tells them to rejoice. His great commandment is Joy. And his whole letter bears witness to the pluck of that true servant and brave gentleman of Christ.

By the commandment of Paul and by the example which Providence has set before our whole nation, let us pluck up courage and try to live more bravely. Amid the softness of today we want more bravery of life. There are people whom you and I know, who have caught the spirit of the apostle, and who live on a high level, boring no person with their grievances, ventilating no grudge against the world, denying their diseases and hiding their trials. If they have wounds, and one suspects that they have, they cover them carefully; if their voice breaks sometimes it is in prayer to God, and in conversation with men. They never tell you how badly they have been used by their fellows; they rather tell you how everybody has used them well. People without discernment think they have never known suffering because they have never whimpered, but when they come to die it will be like the soldier who fell down suddenly without fear and without a moan at his general's

feet. Brave souls and fine Christians, they are the strength of society and a standard of high living to their friends.

The rest of us, I think we must confess, have not shown over-much manhood in playing the game of life, or in following in the steps of our Lord. We have thought too much of ourselves, we have vexed ourselves about our concerns, we have been peevish and petulant. Many of us, and the men more than women, have been quite babyish when things have gone against us, and we haven't had our own way, or somebody said something about us, or we had some bodily ailment. Let us play the man.

Above all things, when you speak of religion, do not mourn and lament as if all things were going wrong, and Christ had been beaten. There are people who never refer to religion but they seem on the point of weeping and they never look out on the world but one hears a moan of despair. Their voice takes the mendicant whine as soon as they touch on sacred things, and let me tell them in a brotherly way—whether they be in the pulpit or the pew—that they are a slander on the gospel. You will make your children infidels, you are next door to an infidel yourself, if that is all the faith you have in God and in the Cross of Christ. There are many things to pain the Christian, and Rome was a fearsome spectacle in the days of Paul. The sight of Nero on the throne would have filled the cowardly Christians of today with pessimism and our school of pulpit piety would have declared there was no hope for society except the coming of the Lord with judgment and with fire. Paul had a keener sense of Nero and all that Nero meant than any one of us, yet Paul saw Jesus Christ high above the throne of Nero and above all thrones, and he believed the time was coming "when in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." "Rejoice," he said to the Philippians, "and again I say unto you rejoice." What he said to the Christians of the first century he says to us in all the relations and circumstances of daily life. Be brave in speech and deed for the sake of your children and your families, for the sake of society and the man next you, for the sake of the church and the world, and for your own sake. You will lift half the weariness of life, and half the burden from your brothers' shoulders, you will cleanse your character from some of its worst faults, and commend Christ to them who do not believe. For after love there is no power in life so admirable and so forcible as pluck, and its highest form is the courage of a strong heart like Paul.—British Weekly.

Musings.

In the long cold winter evening, when the wild winds rage without,
Driving on before their fury, helpless snowflakes tossed about
Like some white-winged vessels plunging on the ocean's heaving breast,
Seeking vainly for a haven where their weary wings might rest,—
Close I draw the crimson curtains; move the arm-chair near the fire,
And amid its downy cushions watch the glowing flames aspire.
Strangely quaint, fantastic shadows deck the wainscot of the walls;
Leaping up to touch the ceiling, darting out into the hall;
Playing hide and seek in corners, creeping o'er the rows of books;
Velling now a fine old painting, finding all the cosy nooks.
When within the library musing, I forget the raging wind;
All the wintry world without me,—all the myriads of mankind.
I have here a world within one,—friends from many a distant land;
Sage, philosopher and poet, come to me at my command.
There are some I've yet to meet with,—those whose minds I have not tried:
There upon the oaken book-shelves, new and old stand side by side.
Learned doctors, classic poets, clad in garb of sombre hue,
Hide beneath their plain apparel, gems of wisdom, rare and true.
History, fiction, wit and humor; works in many a foreign tongue,
Feed the mind with pure elixir; keep the spirit ever young.
Ancient, modern, native, foreign, in true friendship mingle there:
The great spirits of the masters permeate the very air.
When half waking and half dreaming, in that dimly shadowed room,
The rich music of their voices, vibrates through the quiet gloom;
Uttering rare words of wisdom,—lifting veils from beauties hid;
Telling stories of past ages,—what men said and thought and did.
When my heart so worn and weary, out of chord with all the world,—
I draw close the crimson curtains, and the cheery flames unfurled,
Float like flags of peace around me, driving off the threatened gloom,
Life sounds there no more in discords—harmony pervades the room.
Wolfville, N. S.
M. V. JONES.